

THE DIRECTOR OF
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

National Intelligence Officers

19 Jan 79

MEMORANDUM FOR: DCI

THROUGH : D/NFAC

FROM : Richard Lehman, NIO/Warning

Bill has had second thoughts about this month's memorandum. He feels that the meeting somehow got a little out of focus and as a result the product is more an estimate of what is going to happen than a statement of what we are worrying about. On rereading it I'm inclined to agree, but I look on this as one of the pitfalls that we should strive to avoid in the future rather than a requirement that it be redone this month. We would be interested in your reaction.

Del

Richard Lehman

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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

NFAC #0288-79/1

18 January 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
THROUGH : Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment
National Intelligence Officer for Warning & L-
FROM : National Intelligence Officer for Africa
SUBJECT : Warning Report: Sub-Saharan Africa

1. Action Requested: None; the attached report is for your information.

2. Background: One feature of our Africa warning meeting on 16 January was new: OER analysts presented rough and tentative 1979 price forecasts for agricultural commodities and minerals of particular importance to Africa. OER is considering circulating a written briefing along these lines to interested analysts. The people attending the meeting seemed to find this helpful to their understanding of the economic factors which could impinge on the political outlooks of African governments.

3. The meeting was extremely well attended, with extensive debate. I sense, however, that we had trouble finding anything much new to warn about. The report has, therefore, a rather negative cast.

William Parmenter
William Parmenter

Attachment

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NIO/AF:WmParmenter, 18Jan79

NFAC #0288-79/1

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NFAC #0288-79

17 January 1979

WARNING REPORT: SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA* No. 3

SUMMARY

Specialists believe that the Soviets are most probably in a phase of implementing strategies developed during the past year with regard to southern Africa and the Horn, rather than looking now toward new departures, and we expect them to remain in this posture with regard to Africa during the next three months or so. We think that the southern African liberation groups, too, are basically satisfied with their strategies at this point, and we anticipate intensification of their campaigns along present lines rather than any dramatic shifts. The guerrillas' host governments, especially Mozambique, could seek additional Cuban help during the coming period, but we see no specific indications of this as yet other than Castro's own reported assertions. We believe the Smith regime will be able to maintain itself in Rhodesia at least for the next three months or so, and will be able to conduct some sort of "national" elections in April, if not sooner. Its basic psychological and manpower position is likely to continue to deteriorate, however, barring some spectacular and unlikely success in the international arena. We foresee a number of problems in Namibia, even if the UN operation arrives on the ground, but we cannot now tell how serious friction between the UN and South Africa would become. The Angolans seem likely to continue to dilute their relationship with Cuba and the USSR by expanding their contacts with China and Western Europe rather than by reducing the present level of Cuban presence. In the Horn, further air action, rather than ground invasion, is the more likely course Ethiopia will follow against Somalia. We sense no basic changes coming in other situations we have been watching -- Zaire, Chad, Djibouti -- but we note that the situation in Nigeria has tipped against a successful transition to civilian rule.

* *This memorandum is one of a series produced monthly by NIO/AF. Its purpose is to review possible developments in the short-term future that would be damaging to US interests. Obviously many of these developments will not occur in the time-frame or in the manner suggested, or will not occur at all.*

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USSR/Cuba

We do not see signs which we interpret as heralding significant shifts in Soviet or Cuban strategy or tactics with regard to either southern Africa or the Horn region. Re southern Africa, analysts feel that the Soviets are probably now in a phase where they are implementing and refining, with some considerable caution, strategies they had developed or proposed to the Africans last fall. For example, the more direct assistance relationship which we had anticipated would develop between the Soviets and ZANU has not materialized as we expected. In addition to Soviet caution, there have been objections and counter-arguments by the ZAPU leadership, who at least up to now have been the focus of Soviet attentions. The Soviet-ZANU relation may yet develop; but the Soviets certainly show no signs of being in a hurry, if in fact they intend to make this part of their game.

Analysts are very reserved regarding the meaning of the economic agreements reported to have been made by Ethiopia and the USSR during Mengistu's recent trip to Moscow. The figures reported -- 2 to 3 billion dollars equivalent -- are very large, and in the view of the specialists, beyond either Ethiopia's capacity to absorb or Moscow's likely willingness to offer seriously, except possibly over a considerable period of years. The identified Soviet economic programs and proposals that we have seen so far do not add up to anything like these amounts. It follows, therefore, that Soviet analysts do not see in these agreements an indication of a fresh Soviet thrust or new strategy re the Horn, at least pending clarification of these reports.

In short, we foresee for the next two to three months a period of "quiet" in Soviet policy, in the sense that the Soviets will be working to fill in the outlines of programs and lay more solid foundations under existing lines of policy rather than embark on something new.

Regarding Cuban activities, we do not see any specific indications that more Cubans are about to arrive in Africa or that those already there will be shifted about in a major way. The "logic of the situation" in regard to Rhodesia still calls, in our view, for additional Cuban participation in the defense of Zimbabwe guerrilla and host government base areas, but, again, we do not see any fundamentally new development with regard to Cubans in the next three months in either southern Africa or the Horn.

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We think that Smith's constitution -- the "internal settlement" arrangements -- will be approved by the white electorate on 30 January; the national election on 20 April will be the next critical event, in terms both of a test of the Smith regime's security arrangements and authority over the countryside and of the international debate that is certain to follow regarding the "legitimacy" of the polling and results.

At this point -- and our thinking is very preliminary -- most analysts feel that an election will be held (the guerrillas will not be able to prevent some kind of poll), and that it will be of a kind that enables Smith's supporters to argue, with some degree of plausibility, that the regime has fulfilled foreign demands for a vote. This argument will of course be rejected out of hand by other African governments, particularly by the Front Line, and the elections will have virtually no effect on the situation on the ground in and around Rhodesia. The importance of the elections will be in the perceptions of outside observers, and in domestic politics in Western Europe and the US.

Despite criticism of Smith from the white right and "left" wings, we believe that a coup is not likely against him from these quarters, and that he will remain the leader of the white community through the elections, if not beyond. We have no new information on white emigration.

On the guerrilla side, DIA analysts see a possibility that ZAPU might attempt some sort of conventional military action in the months ahead; other analysts regard such an attempt as both foolhardy and still probably beyond the organizing and logistic capacity of the guerrillas, and thus very unlikely. All agree that, if ZAPU should attempt such an operation in the next three months, it would end in disaster for the attacking force. Most specialists believe that the guerrilla leaders, in both ZAPU and ZANU, are reasonably well satisfied with their present strategy and tactics, and that they look forward to a steady intensification of the guerrilla campaigns (sometimes at the expense of each other).

The South Africans, currently preoccupied with Namibia, seem unlikely to rethink their strategy toward Rhodesia until after the April elections.

ANGOLA

UNITA's more straitened circumstances (including the loss of M'Pupa airstrip, the main reception point for materiel from abroad) and the MPLA's

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detente with Zaire and opening to the West (and even more to Europe than to the US) have not produced any reports or other indications of negotiations between Savimbi and Neto, and analysts do not expect such a development anytime soon. The Luanda regime is also broadening its contacts toward the Chinese; we would expect these contacts to bear fruit at some point, although they clearly will irritate the Soviets and Cubans. Neto is reported to be preparing to visit Havana; if the visit comes off, we may get some better indication of the future course of Cuban-Angolan relations than we have now.

NAMIBIA

In one limited sense, specialists are mildly optimistic about Namibia; they think the South Africans, as a matter of international politics, will refrain for the time being from fresh raids on any large scale into Angola. However, the specialists are concerned on two main counts even if a UN presence is in fact installed in Namibia during the next few weeks:

- they fear that the UN at this point is still ill-prepared to take up the task of monitoring a cease-fire or substituting its authority for that of the South Africans;
- they foresee a period of intense pulling and hauling between the UN on the ground in Namibia and the residual South African forces and administration, with a continuing possibility that some local event will lead to a breakdown of arrangements for moving to Namibia's independence under UN auspices.

Some analysts, however, while admitting these dangers, also point out that the UN bureaucracy is not at this point more ill-prepared for the Namibia operation than it has been for other peace-keeping enterprises in the past, and that whether local difficulties produce a breakdown will depend heavily on the political mood and judgment of the South Africans and SWAPO. Each at this point is extremely wary. If a will toward a relatively peaceful transition can be kept alive, difficulties can be overcome. Without a political choice to proceed, any problem can be made insuperable.

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We do not see indications of an Ethiopian "invasion" of Somalia; neither Cuban nor Ethiopian ground forces are in place for such an operation. There remains a possibility that the Ethiopians may stage air raids deeper into Somalia in retaliation for Ogaden guerrilla activity. As we noted last month, the Ethiopian campaign in Eritrea contains the elements for border incidents with Sudan. Mengistu and Nimeiry are now scheduled to meet in February in Sierra Leone; we cannot yet tell whether there are serious possibilities for a reconciliation between these two leaders.

ZAIRE

[At the State Department's request, Zaire was the subject of a special meeting on 12 January to consider a telegram from Embassy Kinshasa, which called attention to the situation in the city itself. In effect, the Embassy warned that food riots or other turbulence was possible, but concluded that nobody in the field could say when.]

Specialists do not see that the situation in Kinshasa, or in Zaire generally, has deteriorated in more than minor ways beyond the basically threatening state that the country has been in for some time. They do not see new elements of sufficient weight to make us think that Mobutu is likely to be overthrown any time soon; the security forces appear to be no less effective, in their fashion, than they have been, and some aid is on the way to relieve the food situation. Mobutu has taken steps, notably the establishment of canteens, to alleviate the daily burdens of military families. The threat of Shaba III has not grown, and the inter-African force is apparently set to stay through the spring. Nobody is optimistic about Zaire under Mobutu, but nobody is willing to predict a sudden fall either.

TANZANIA-UGANDA

The Tanzanians continue to gather forces on the Ugandan border in the evident hope that this will contribute to an effort to oust Idi Amin. We continue to believe that such an effort, unless conducted with a degree of finesse that we think unlikely, could place American citizens and other foreigners in jeopardy.

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NIGERIA

As the current intelligence publications have noted, analysts believe that military intervention to derail the process of transition to civilian rule is now more likely in the coming months than it has been heretofore. Also as noted in current intelligence, the Nigerian leadership is giving more serious consideration to using oil as a political weapon than it has in the recent past. Developments re Iran will be the central element here, in that a shortage of oil worldwide would open opportunities for the Nigerians to press the US on southern Africa in a way they have not previously sought to do. Nigeria now provides a significant percentage of US crude imports, but also is heavily dependent on continued sales to finance its own politically important development program.

CHAD

US observers in Ndjamena report that tensions within the Chad government seem to be growing, and each faction of the government has its own armed forces in the capital. The French are on the watch. There has been no basic change in the situation of the northern-based rebel forces which the Libyans have backed.

DJIBOUTI

The local government leaders are concerned that the installation of a Soviet embassy, which they had sought to delay, will increase the chances of subversion in favor of Ethiopia. They are probably right.

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